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ABSTRACT

In 1976, the Montgomery County Public Schools began the development of a kindergarten through grade 8 Instructional Program in Reading/Language Arts (IPR/LA) for teaching the English language arts. Goals of the effort were to improve reading and listening comprehension instruction and to improve program consistency across grades, schools, and areas. The first full year of data collection for the reading program was 1982-83. During that year the focus of study centered on descriptive information about the characteristics of reading instruction and problems in the implementation process in the study schools. A sample of 20 elementary schools was selected for the reading study and stratified on the basis of achievement level and length of time the school had been exposed to IPR/LA. Study findings indicated that while some teachers were able to implement the revised curriculum in a number of areas, some serious problems still remained. Further, the program was not implemented for students at all achievement levels. In addition, no consistent criteria were in use system-wide to monitor program implementation. Neither the training nor the materials provided to schools to support the implementation process were perceived as adequate. Finally, the role of the reading teacher appeared to have changed, which created role conflicts for some school-based reading teachers. A technical appendix includes data collection procedures and instruments used in classroom observation. (HOD)

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PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Reading Study: First-Year Report

August 1984

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

READING STUDY:

FIRST-YEAR REPORT

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

READING STUDY: FIRST-YEAR REPORT

BACKGROUND

In 1976, MCPS began development of the K-8 Instructional Program in Reading/Language Arts (IPR/LA) for improving the teaching of the English Language Arts. The objectives for the new program were approved by the Board of Education in June of 1981 as the mandated Program of Studies for reading/listening for all students in Grades K-8. The IPR/LA includes the mandated objectives and a variety of recommended support materials (e.g., teachers' guides and tests). Materials for the narration component have been completed, while those for other forms of discourse (exposition, persuasion) are in various stages of implementation. The program is currently being implemented in schools under the direction of area offices. The Reading Study is a multiyear evaluation of the narration component of IPR/LA. Its purpose is to judge systematically the degree to which schools are actually using the new curriculum and its impact on reading instruction and student achievement.

A sample of 20 MCPS elementary schools was selected for the Reading Study, stratified on the basis of achievement level (above or below the county mean in reading) and length of time the school had been exposed to IPR/LA. Schools from each area were included (see Exhibit 1 for a list of study schools by strata). Two schools in the sample had not officially begun implementation and were initially included to provide some baseline information on classroom characteristics prior to program implementation. Data collection revealed, however, that many teachers at these schools had been exposed to the program at other schools prior to the study. Thus, their classroom practices could not be considered descriptive of those prior to implementation, and no baseline data are reported in the study.

The 1982-83 school year was the first full year of data collection. Respondents included area staff, principals, school specialists, and classroom teachers. Within each sample school, two first and two fourth grade classrooms were randomly selected for the first year of the study for classroom observations and student data collection. The approximately 1800 sample students in these classes will be followed for the duration of the study. Analyses of first year data focused on descriptive information about the characteristics of reading instruction and implementation problems systemwide.

POLICY ISSUES

This report focuses on several policy issues that can be addressed using the data already collected. The three major issues examined in this report are the following:

- Is IPR/LA being implemented for all students?

EXHIBIT 1

Sample Schools for the Reading Study

Years Implementing Curriculum	Achievement Level		Total
	Below County Mean	Above County Mean	
Since 1981-82	Broad Acres	Potomac	
	Maryvale	Fallsmead	
	Rolling Terrace	Sherwood	6
From 1980-81	*Beall	Seven Locks	
	Fields Road	Cedar Grove	
	Viers Mill	Greenwood	6
Prior to 1980	Poolesville	Bannockburn	
	Clarksburg	Laytonsville	
	Glenallan	Kemp Mill	6
Nonimplementing schools		Bethesda	
		Farmland	2
			20

*Beall consolidated with a school in this category of implementation.

- Are the supports, training, and materials necessary for implementation being provided to school personnel?

- What roles are played by the different administrative levels in monitoring and managing the implementation process?

FINDINGS

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

IPR/LA provides an approach to teaching reading/listening comprehension that encompasses different instructional strategies as well as differential use of materials such as basal readers and tradebooks. Study findings indicate that while some teachers were able to implement the revised curriculum in a number of areas, some serious problems still remained. Further, the program was not being implemented for students at all achievement levels; low-achieving students in particular often received what might be characterized as a "different program." These variations were not related to the amount of time a school had officially been implementing the program. Specific findings were the following:

- Instructional strategies recommended by the curriculum guides (setting a purpose for reading, using students' background knowledge, and open-ended questioning) were in fairly widespread use in study schools. Teachers were observed using these strategies with 53 to 77 percent of the groups in reading instruction. The degree to which these strategies were used before the advent of IPR/LA is not known.

- Reported planning time for reading instruction had increased for 43 to 73 percent of the teachers, depending on the group surveyed, and particularly for teachers with students at different achievement levels. This suggests that teachers were attempting to adapt the program to fit the needs of students as the program requires.

- Expected changes in teacher-directed, comprehension-related activities were not found to be widespread. The program stresses comprehension- related activities that require teacher direction. However, reading in context (reading sentences, paragraphs, and whole stories) did not constitute a majority of the time spent during observed reading instruction. Twenty-seven percent of the teachers interviewed felt that comprehension-related instruction had increased because of implementation, while fewer teachers (11%) reported that teacher-directed reading instruction had increased because of the program.[1]

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1. Teacher-directed instruction refers to reading instruction that is directly under the teacher's guidance. Alternatively, students could work independently, with peers, or with an aide.

- The reading/listening program in narration stresses the use of the best in children's literature, with tradebooks being preferred to basal readers and workbooks. While students were observed using a variety of materials, the amount of time spent with basal readers and workbooks was more than double the time spent reading or listening to tradebooks.

- The use of criterion-referenced tests developed for the curriculum posed some significant problems. These tests were designed to support instruction and were strongly recommended by the Department of Academic Skills.[2] However, their importance and usefulness were not clear to all school staff. Forty-one percent of the teachers interviewed found the results helpful.

- Record keeping was seen as inadequate. The lack of a record-keeping system was seen as a serious weakness by area office staff. Thirty-nine percent of the teachers reported including progress in the program's objectives in their own records of students' reading achievement.

- A substantial proportion of teachers (34-39%) did not feel the program was appropriate for low achievers. This feeling was more prevalent among teachers whose classes included such students. These feelings were clearly reflected in instructional practices. In first grade, low-achieving students received less teacher direction, spending more time in independent seatwork. Low-achieving first graders were also less likely to be exposed to instructional strategies recommended by the curriculum. In fourth grade, low-achieving students also spent less time under teacher direction, were more likely to use basals, and spent less time using tradebooks.

SUPPORTING AND MANAGING IMPLEMENTATION

While the Department of Academic Skills developed the new curriculum, staff of that department are not directly responsible for its implementation. They provide mainly consultative and supportive services as requested. The area offices are charged with monitoring the process. Ultimately, it is up to the individual schools to use the new program in the classroom.

First-year data indicate a number of problems in the supports for and management of the program implementation process. These problems appear to have arisen less because of the actions of any one group than because of a lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and expectations. No consistent criteria were in use systemwide to monitor program implementation. What was considered evidence of implementation appeared to be an individual decision by each supervisor and/or teacher specialist. Neither the training nor the materials provided to schools to support the implementation process were perceived as adequate. More and improved in-service training was called

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2. As of May 1, 1984, these tests were mandated as a part of the minority achievement monitoring program.

for. Finally, the role of the reading teacher was reported to have changed, and this change created role conflicts for some school-based reading teachers. Specific findings were the following:

- Ad hoc and individual criteria for monitoring implementation were in use; no systemwide standards were applied, and practices varied from area to area. Several area respondents felt implementation was not taken seriously because no clear statement of required program components was available.

- Many area staff and principals felt that the in-service training provided to teachers was not sufficient. Approximately half the teachers had received five hours or less of training on the new curriculum. First grade teachers and teachers with low-achieving students in their class were more likely to feel the training was insufficient and to want additional help.

- While almost all teachers were familiar with the instructional guides and found them helpful, 44 percent mentioned problems with their organization and presentation. Reading teachers and media specialists felt other materials (core-book lists and basal correlation sheets), while useful, were too limited in scope.

- There is a conflict in the role of school reading teachers between providing direct instruction to students and serving as a resource to teachers and assisting principals in implementation.

IMPLICATIONS

The problems in implementation of the reading/language arts program have implications at two levels: for the curriculum itself, and for the general process of curriculum implementation and improvement in MCPS.

IPR/LA Implementation

First, with respect to IPR/LA implementation itself, a number of implications can be drawn from the specific study findings. These concern instructional practice, use of tests, in-service training and support materials, and program monitoring.

Some, but not all, aspects of instructional practice matched the Board-mandated Program of Studies. Continued effort is needed in order to increase the use of these practices. The issue is of particular concern for low-achieving students. Teachers have not been convinced that the program is appropriate for low achievers. The instruction provided to these students was less likely to match program standards than that provided to higher achievers. Since the curriculum was mandated for all students, a greater effort needs to be made to provide adaptations which better meet these students' needs, to convince teachers of the efficacy of the program in its present form with low achievers, or to improve management procedures for implementing curricula.

The purpose of the curriculum tests and the procedures for their use are not well understood. These ambiguities as well as the lack of a record-keeping system have resulted in a mixed message about the need to assess performance

on curriculum objectives. These problems will be remedied in large part by the inclusion of these tests in the mandated annual testing program initiated this spring and the provision of a record-keeping system for use with the program, which is expected to be available in 1984-85. Continued efforts need to be directed, however, toward helping schools understand how to use the data produced by the tests.

Neither in-service training nor support materials have been adequate. While a specific number of additional hours cannot be recommended, more and/or improved training is clearly needed, especially on how to adapt and use the program with low achievers. In addition, teachers want a better understanding of program principles and more practical demonstration of classroom procedures using the new program. Training should include assistance to teachers in adapting and developing new lessons based on the program objectives. Support materials need to be improved to increase their usefulness: instructional guides should be indexed by objectives, and core-book lists and basal correlation sheets should be updated and expanded.

A clear statement of what should happen in the classroom is also necessary for effective monitoring of program implementation. Principals and teachers need a list of specific program components (type of plans required, appropriate instructional practices, use of tradebooks) to use in assessing the progress of implementation. However, unless this results in a statement of required program components, implementation may continue to be piecemeal.

Curriculum Implementation in MCPS

Problems such as those mentioned above are not unique to Montgomery County, and time alone does not provide a cure. Study after study has documented innovative ideas that were developed but never implemented in any but a superficial way. It has become clear that program implementation is, under the best of circumstances, difficult and must be carefully orchestrated if it is to succeed. It is time to take a very serious look at how MCPS goes about the program implementation task, as this is only one of a series of studies in which implementation problems have been found. DEA studies in other program areas (the Instructional System in Mathematics, career education, gifted and talented) have documented similar problems in the implementation process. In MCPS, curriculum development, monitoring, and instruction have been separated, and there is no system in place for curriculum implementation that ties the various elements together. Collegial monitoring and good will are not sufficient to accomplish implementation. Without systematic procedures which both support and enforce implementation, the result is Board-approved programs that are never fully implemented.

MCPS has a number of curriculum reform efforts in various stages of dissemination in the schools. In the English Language Arts, the writing and speaking program[3] is currently being piloted, and plans call for broader implementation next year. Before such expansion is allowed, DEA feels it is critical that a complete, multiyear plan for implementation be prepared. Rather than continue with the "dribble" approach to program implementation

3. Approved by the Board of Education on May 21, 1984.

that has been characteristic to date, it is time to take a more systematic approach to the problem. Without systematic procedures for implementation that specify responsibilities, establish requirements, and provide resources, there is no reason to expect that the writing program will fare any better than those examined to date.

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Technical Appendix

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READING STUDY: FIRST-YEAR REPORT

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In 1976, MCPS began the development of the K-8 Instructional Program in Reading/Language Arts (IPR/LA) for teaching the English Language Arts. Goals of the effort were to improve reading/listening comprehension instruction and to improve program consistency across grades, schools, and areas. The objectives for the new program were approved by the Board of Education in June of 1981 as the mandated Program of Studies for reading/listening for all students in Grades K-8. The IPL/LA includes the mandated objectives and a variety of recommended support materials (e.g., teachers' guides and tests). Materials for the narration component have been completed, while those for other forms of discourse (exposition, persuasion) are in various stages of implementation. The program is currently being implemented in schools under the direction of area offices. The Reading Study is a multiyear evaluation of the narration component of the IPR/LA. Its purpose is to systematically judge the degree to which schools are actually using the new curriculum and, once in use, its impact on reading instruction and student achievement. Based on study data, recommendations can be made to effect necessary adjustments to the reading/language arts program and to improve the administrative structure for implementation of instructional programs in other areas.

The first full year of data collection for the Reading Study was 1982-83. This progress report on the first year of the study focuses on descriptive information about the characteristics of reading instruction and problems in the implementation process in the study schools. As more data are collected, an attempt will be made to develop school level profiles that build on this information and clarify how the various characteristics of implementation relate to each other. This first chapter briefly summarizes the study design. Chapters II and III present the findings on instructional practices in reading, and the program implementation process and problems.

WHAT WAS STUDIED

The first-year report focuses on several policy issues that can be addressed using the data already collected. The three major issues examined in this report are the following:

- Is IPR/LA being implemented for all students?
- Are the supports, training, and materials necessary for implementation being provided to school personnel?
- What roles are played by the different administrative levels in monitoring and managing the implementation process?

The first issue concerns how implementation of the new program has affected what actually happens in the classroom. In collecting data, the following research questions were addressed:

- What were the characteristics of the reading instruction provided to students and how did these match up with the new curriculum as described in the Program of Studies?

- Have teachers developed a coherent approach to reading instruction that encompasses those instructional components emphasized in the new program?

- Has this new approach been implemented with all students, regardless of achievement level? To what extent were variations in the degree of implementation related to the achievement composition of schools or classes?

First-year data also permit an analysis of the supports for the implementation process. The research questions included the following:

- What training and materials have been provided to schools to implement the program?

- Has the in-service training provided been adequate to support program implementation?

- Were the support materials appropriate, and what problems have occurred in their use?

First-year data also provide a description of the administrative process. MCPS is a large and complex administrative system. The Department of Academic Skills developed the new curriculum, but they are not responsible for its implementation. Area offices are supposed to support and monitor the process, while it is ultimately up to the individual schools to use the new program in the classroom. Research questions focused on the management and administrative problems that may arise out of the effort to reorient classroom practice and included the following:

- Were procedures in place to monitor the implementation of the new curriculum? Were standard criteria for assessing implementation applied?

- What roles were played by different school staff in monitoring and managing the implementation process?

A sample of 20 MCPS elementary schools was selected for the reading study and stratified on the basis of achievement level and length of time the school has been exposed to IPR/LA. Schools from each area were included. The stratifiers were selected as proxies for variables that may influence implementation and its impact and about which data are being collected during the study. The number of years implementing serves as an initial proxy for degree of implementation. Two schools in the sample had not officially begun implementation and were originally included to provide some baseline information on classroom characteristics prior to program implementation. (Data collection revealed, however, that many teachers in these schools had already used the program prior to the study. Thus, their classroom practices could not be considered descriptive of those prior to implementation.) Since it was thought that program implementation and the

effect on instruction might vary by achievement level, the sample was also stratified by achievement. Schools were classified as above or below the county mean on the previous year's CAT reading achievement scores. Within the sample schools (see Table 1 for a list of study schools by strata), four classes (2 first grade and 2 fourth grade) were randomly selected for study the first year. The approximately 1800 sample students in these classes will be followed for the duration of the study. Classrooms at these two grade levels were selected in order to allow comparisons of program implementation and instructional changes at the primary and upper elementary grades.

Various data collection instruments were developed and used during the first year of the study, including interview guides, questionnaires, and observation checklists. Topics covered in the interviews with first- and fourth grade teachers included planning, in-service training, the role of school-based specialists in implementation, the use of curriculum support materials, instructional practices in reading and changes due to the curriculum, attitudes toward the program, and its appropriateness for students at all achievement levels. Questionnaires given to classroom teachers at other grade levels in the sample schools covered the same topics in less detail. In order to get a clearer picture of instructional practices, unannounced classroom observations were conducted in the sample classrooms during three time periods (fall, winter, and spring). Both teacher and student behaviors were observed. The information has been reported in group terms to preserve teacher confidentiality. No observation data have been made available in any way for teacher evaluation purposes. The technical appendix describes the data collection procedures and the categories used for classroom observations in more detail.

CHAPTER II: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The first major policy issue addressed in this report is whether the new reading/language arts curriculum is being implemented for all students. First-year study data present a mixed picture. Some aspects of reading instruction more closely resembled the Board-approved Program of Studies than others. For some teachers, the program did appear to constitute an alternative approach to teaching reading that encompasses different instructional strategies as well as the way basal readers are used. However, the program was not being implemented for students at all achievement levels; low-achieving students were receiving different instruction. These variations were not related to the amount of time a school had officially been implementing the program. The findings are presented in the following sections.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Information was collected on a variety of components of reading instruction, with particular attention being given to those believed to be affected the most significantly by the reading/listening program in narration. The degree of program implementation appeared to be uneven:

TABLE 1

Sample Schools for the Reading Study

Years Implementing Curriculum	Achievement Level		Total
	Below County Mean	Above County Mean	
Since 1981-82	Broad Acres Maryvale Rolling Terrace	Potomac Fallsmead Sherwood	6
From 1980-81	*Beall Fields Road Viers Mill	Seven Locks Cedar Grove Greenwood	6
Prior to 1980	Poolesville Clarksburg Glenallan	Bannockburn Laytonsville Kemp Mill	6
Nonimplementing Schools		Bethesda Farmland	2 20

*Beall consolidated with a school in this category of implementation.

- Reported planning time for reading instruction had increased for 43 to 73 percent of the teachers, depending on the group surveyed, and particularly for teachers with students at different achievement levels. This suggests that teachers were attempting to adapt the program to fit the needs of students as the program requires.

- Expected changes in teacher-directed, comprehension-related activities were not found to be widespread. The program stresses comprehension- related activities that require teacher direction. However, reading in context (reading sentences, paragraphs, or whole stories) did not constitute a majority of the time during observed reading instruction. Twenty-seven percent of the teachers interviewed felt that comprehension-related instruction had increased because of implementation, while fewer teachers (11%) reported that teacher-directed reading instruction had increased because of the program.[1]

- The reading/listening program in narration stresses the use of the best in children's literature, with tradebooks being preferred to basal readers and workbooks. While students were observed using a variety of materials the amount of time spent with basal readers and workbooks was more than double the time spent reading or listening to tradebooks.

- Instructional strategies recommended by the curriculum guides (setting a purpose for reading, using students' background knowledge, and open-ended questioning) were in fairly widespread use. Teachers were observed using these strategies with 51 to 77 percent of the groups in reading instruction. The degree to which these strategies were used before the advent of IPR/LA is not known.

- The use of criterion-referenced tests developed for the curriculum posed some significant problems. These tests were designed to support instruction and were strongly recommended by the Department of Academic Skills.[2] However, their importance and usefulness were not clear to all school staff. Forty-one percent of the teachers interviewed found the results helpful.

- Record keeping was seen as inadequate. The lack of a record-keeping system was seen as a serious weakness by area office staff. Thirty-nine percent of the teachers reported including progress in the program's objectives in their own records of students' reading achievement.

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1. Teacher-directed instruction refers to reading instruction that is directly under the teacher's guidance. Alternatively, students could work independently, with peers, or with an aide.

2. As of May 1, 1984, these tests were mandated as a part of the systemwide testing program for monitoring minority achievement.

- Teachers who reported using the approach to instructional materials preferred by the curriculum designers (16% to 32%) were observed providing reading instruction that matched program design more closely in other respects as well: teacher direction, time on comprehension, and instructional strategies.

Details in each of these areas are presented in the following sections.

Instructional Planning

The Program of Studies requires that teachers select a variety of materials and adapt strategies and suggested lessons to fit the needs of their students. In other words, one cannot just open the teacher's manual and implement the program without additional independent planning. Thus, one would expect the teacher planning time to increase with implementation. Teachers were asked about their instructional planning for reading and whether implementation of the curriculum has had an impact on that activity. Forty-three percent of the first and fourth grade teachers interviewed in the fall felt that the amount of time they spent on instructional planning for reading had increased as a result of program implementation. The response to the teacher questionnaire indicated an even higher percentage (73) felt that planning time had increased due to the new curriculum. Teachers with students at different achievement levels were more likely to feel the time spent on planning had increased as a result of the curriculum than were those teachers whose students were all at the same achievement level (57% vs 42%).

Teacher-Directed Instruction and Comprehension

Table 2 presents some data on reading instructional characteristics observed in the first and fourth grade classrooms: teacher direction, reading tasks, materials used, and instructional strategies. Because of the curriculum's focus on comprehension activities that involve critical thinking and discussion of what has been read, larger amounts of time may be spent in teacher-directed instruction when the program is implemented. As Table 2 indicates, students in Grades 1 and 4 were working under teacher direction approximately 47 percent of the time during the observed reading instruction. However, in the interviews, only 14 percent of the teachers felt that this amount of time had changed as a result of the program.

The curriculum is intended to increase the time spent on such comprehension activities as reading in context (reading sentences, paragraphs, or whole stories) and to reduce the time students spend on decoding isolated letters and words. Table 2 indicates that over the school year, as might be expected, comprehension activities increased, while the proportion of time spent on letters and words declined. However, reading in context took up less than half the time in reading instruction in either grade. In the interviews, 27 percent of the teachers felt they spent more time on comprehension skills because of the new program.

TABLE 2

Characteristics of Reading Instruction
(% of student's observed time in reading instruction)

		First Grade	Fourth Grade
Working Under Teacher Direction		47	47
Working Independently		50	42
Working with Other Adults		2	8
Working with Peers		1	3
Reading Tasks:			
Letters and Words	Nov.	33	10
	Feb.	30	9
	May	18	9
Reading in Context (sentences, paragraphs, or stories)	Nov.	16	30
	Feb.	18	28
	May	34	42
Listening*		26	38
Writing**		22	11
Speaking		5	6

*Listening activities included listening to the teacher or peers reading aloud as well as listening to teacher directions.

**The definition of writing activities was a broad one and included copying letters and words, note-taking, etc., as well as creative writing.

TABLE 2 (continued)

Characteristics of Reading Instruction
(% of student's observed time in reading instruction)

	First Grade	Fourth Grade
Materials Used:		
Basal Readers	20	22
Workbooks/Worksheets	31	21
Other Materials (boardwork, film, teacher-made materials)	40	25
Tradebooks	5	26
No Materials	4	0
	(% of groups observed)*	
Instructional Strategies:		
Setting Purpose	66	70
Use of Student Background and Experience	38	67
Open-ended Questions	66	83

*This figure represents the proportion of all reading groups observed across the three time periods with whom teachers used a strategy. Since teachers could use more than one strategy, the percentages total more than 100 percent.

Variety of Materials

One of the major aspects of the new reading/language arts program in narration is its focus on the use of a variety of materials and the best in children's literature. Observation data were therefore gathered about the kinds of materials in use during reading instruction. As Table 2 indicates, the proportion of time in reading instruction that students spent using the basal readers was approximately 20 percent for both first and fourth graders. Teachers were observed using them with a majority of their reading groups in both grades. It is important to note that the use of workbooks is not encouraged in the curriculum; yet it did occupy a substantial proportion of instructional time. Conversely, the proportion of time spent using tradebooks was generally low at both grade levels. Their use was almost nonexistent at the first grade (5%), while in the fourth grade, students were observed using tradebooks 26 percent of the time.

Instructional Strategies

Certain instructional strategies (setting a purpose, using student's background, open-ended questions) are used in the sample lesson units in the instructional guides and are ones that the program developers would like to encourage. The use of these practices in Montgomery County prior to the advent of IPR/LA is not known, and thus their use by teachers does not in itself imply use of the guides or changes relating to the new curriculum. Such practices were generally rather widespread in study schools, as Table 2 indicates. Teachers were observed setting a purpose for group instruction - "Now let's read to find out what a character in the story does next" - with 72 percent of the groups observed. The teacher's use of students' background knowledge and experience in the lesson was more likely to take place in fourth grade than in first grade. Overall, teachers were observed using this strategy with just about half (53%) of the groups observed during reading instruction. Teachers used open-ended questions to encourage critical thinking by their students with an average of 77 percent of the groups observed. First grade teachers used such questions somewhat less frequently than fourth grade teachers.

Testing and Record Keeping

A final aspect of instructional practice about which data were collected concerns the evaluation of student progress in learning the reading/language arts objectives. Criterion-referenced tests at each grade level have been developed for the program. These tests provide a means for teachers to assess students' performance on the curriculum objectives in comprehension (decoding objectives are not covered by the tests because of the wide availability of assessment measures for such objectives) and were to be given in the fall and winter at the beginning of each semester. The tests are not required as part of the curriculum but are certainly strongly recommended by DAS, and it is hard to see how a program could be fully implemented without having some measure of student performance on its objectives. Nevertheless, the tests have been a source of controversy and problems. Table 3 provides some data on their use and reactions to the tests by various respondents. Forty-one to 63 percent of classroom teachers found the test results helpful. A number of substantive concerns were expressed by teachers and other staff during the interviews.

First, the lack of any phonics/decoding on the test has confused teachers about the place of such skills in the curriculum. Teachers interpreted the absence as a lack of emphasis on these skills, although they are included in the Program of Studies. This is a clear example of the problems of communication between program developers and those who are supposed to implement the program. Second, some concerns were expressed about the appropriateness of the CRTs for the first grade and for poor readers in general. The proportion of first graders exempted from the testing by teachers varied widely in the sample schools, and in one school only two students were tested.

Confusion also existed about out-of-grade-level testing. The tests were designed to measure performance on curriculum objectives at the student's instructional level. If all students are tested at grade level, the tests may be too easy for many above-grade-level students and too difficult for those reading below, and they were not intended for use in this way. While out-of-level testing thus can be done and makes more sense with this curriculum since the broader objectives span grades, such tests could not be centrally scored which gave many schools and teachers the impression it should not be done at all. Teachers with below-grade-level students were forced to hand score out-of-level tests or were left without any information on those students' performance on the curriculum objectives to use for instructional planning.

It is clear that a better understanding of the tests and their purposes as well as procedures for their use are needed at the school level. It is interesting to note the differences between reading teachers' and classroom teachers' views of the tests (see Table 3). Presumably the reading teachers have a clearer view of their uses, but unfortunately this has not been communicated to classroom staff. Only 6 percent of the teachers interviewed recalled receiving any in-service training on the use of the tests or interpretation of test results.

The mixed message about the need to assess performance on curriculum objectives was compounded by the lack of a record-keeping system developed for the program. Twelve of the 15 area respondents felt that this lack created major problems for the schools in implementing the program. Without a countywide system, it is difficult to transfer information on student performance from school to school, a particular problem when schools consolidate or with high mobility students. Without a record-keeping system that reflects the objectives and books read, teachers have less incentive to consider the new program important. They continue to use the basal and to record student progress in terms of the basal reader system provided. Only 39 percent of those responding to the teacher questionnaire included curriculum objectives from the Program of Studies in their records. A few area respondents questioned how the program could be "ready to go" when such mechanisms were not in place.[3]

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3 A record-keeping system was piloted for several years and was approved for general use in 1984-85. It is recommended by DAS for use with the curriculum.

TABLE 3

Reported Use of Curriculum Tests by School Staff

	Percentage of respondents answering yes:			
	1&4 Grade Teachers	Teachers in Other Grades	Principals	Reading Teachers
CRTs:				
Use	68	86	89	100
Timely*		77	61	
Helpful	41	63	56	86
Novel tests: (4-6 Grade Only)				
Use	58	50		95
Helpful	44	46		83

Blanks indicate that the question/response categories were not included in the instruments for those respondents.

*Timeliness referred to the receipt of test materials.

A Coherent Approach

The curriculum guides suggest three different ways in which teachers may use materials to approach teaching the program's objectives: 1) the teacher uses a basal reader in sequence and supplements it where needed with other materials in order to teach IPR/LA objectives, 2) the teacher does not use a basal in sequence but primarily selects appropriate basal stories and supplements with other materials to teach IPR/LA objectives, and 3) the teacher selects IPR/LA objectives and finds the best materials from various sources to teach the objectives and fit student needs.[4] While all three are in the guide, the third alternative fits most closely the ideal envisioned by program developers. These choices stress the way in which basal readers are used, although other program aspects also distinguish the new curriculum from previous approaches. The study findings suggest that the approach to instructional materials is integrated with other components of instruction and that these elements form a coherent program for reading instruction.

The proportions of different respondents selecting each of the three approaches to teaching the curriculum objectives are presented in Table 4.[5] Six percent of the first grade teachers and 26 percent of the fourth grade teachers in the interviews, and 32 percent of the classroom teachers in other grades who responded to the questionnaires, selected the approach preferred by the program designers. The choice of approach was clearly associated with various instructional practices observed in use by these teachers: teacher direction, reading whole stories, and instructional strategies. Tables 5 through 7 present information on the relationship between the approach a teacher selected in the interview and these other aspects of observed instruction. As Tables 5 and 6 indicate, teachers selecting the third approach--the one preferred by program developers--provided more teacher-directed instruction, and their students spent more time reading whole stories. The instructional strategies used also varied depending on the choice of approach to instructional materials. Three strategies associated with the curriculum--setting purposes, using students' background knowledge and experience, and asking open-ended questions--were indeed more prevalent in the classrooms of those teachers who selected the curriculum approach (see Table 7). Thus, greater teacher direction, more time spent reading whole stories, and the use of instructional strategies that emphasize meaning in discourse and critical thinking did seem to characterize classrooms in which the curriculum was being implemented.

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4. These options are described on p.3 of the General Introduction to the guides under the heading Use of Materials.

5. Classroom teachers were asked to select the approach that they used; other respondents were asked to select the approach they felt was most appropriate for teachers.

TABLE 4

Approaches to Instructional Materials

	Percentage of Respondents Selecting Each:			
	Basal in Sequence	Basal Selectively	Objectives and Best Materials	Other
Area Supervisors	0	12	88	
Area Teacher Specialists	33	33	33	
First Grade Teachers	83	11	6	
Fourth Grade Teachers	43	26	26	
Teachers in Other Grades	45	15	32	8
Reading Teachers	19	19	48	14

TABLE 5

Observed Time Spent in Teacher-Directed Reading Instruction by Students of Teachers Selecting Different Approaches to Instructional Materials

Amount of Observed Time in Teacher-Directed Instruction:	Low	Medium	High
	(Percentage of Students)		
Teacher Selected:			
Basal in Sequence	42	31	28
Basal Selectively	28	44	28
Objectives and Best Materials	17	25	58

TABLE 6

Observed Time Spent Reading Whole Stories by Students of Teachers Selecting Different Approaches to Instructional Materials

Amount of Observed Time in Reading Whole Stories:	Low	Medium	High
	(Percentage of Students)		
Teacher Selected:			
Basal in Sequence	43	42	15
Basal Selectively	41	34	25
Objectives and Best Materials	25	33	42

TABLE 7

Instructional Strategies Observed in Use by Teachers Selecting Different Approaches to Instructional Materials

	Strategies								
	Set Purpose			Use Background Knowledge			Open-ended Questions		
	(Percentage of Teachers Observed Using With:)								
	No	Some	All	No	Some	All	No	Some	All
	Reading Groups								
Teacher Selected:									
Basal in Sequence	12	48	40	36	40	24	12	44	44
Basal Selectively	25	0	75	75	25	0	0	25	75
Objectives and Best Materials	16	0	84	17	17	66	16	0	84

INSTRUCTIONAL DIFFERENCES FOR LOW ACHIEVERS

A final issue concerning implementation of the curriculum at the classroom level is whether the program is perceived as appropriate and is being implemented for students at all achievement levels. The first-year data indicate that different instruction, perhaps even different reading programs, were being provided to students at different achievement levels:

- A substantial proportion of teachers (34 to 39 percent) did not feel the program was appropriate for low achievers. This feeling was more prevalent among teachers whose classes included such students.
- In first grade, low-achieving students received less teacher direction, spending more time in independent seatwork.
- Low-achieving first graders were also less likely to be exposed to instructional strategies recommended by the curriculum.
- In the fourth grade, low-achieving students also spent less time under teacher direction, were more likely to use basals, and spent less time using tradebooks.

While some of the differences in first grade may be attributed to the fact that below-grade students were frequently nonreaders with the obvious attendant differences in appropriate instruction, other differences such as amount of teacher direction seem less appropriate. The fourth grade differences do appear to indicate that at least some teachers were not attempting to implement all aspects of the Program of Studies with their low-achieving students.

Table 8 presents respondents views on the appropriateness of the curriculum for students of differing achievement levels. Area staff were most likely to feel the program could work for all students, including those below grade level. However, only 48 to 56 percent of classroom teachers felt the program was appropriate for the low achievers. In commenting on the problems in implementing the program with students who are achieving below grade level, area staff raised a number of concerns that were also reflected in teacher interviews. "Teachers don't feel comfortable using the program with this group and are reluctant to attempt it. They feel below-grade students must concentrate on basic skills, i.e., decoding and phonics, and can't cope with comprehension." One area staffer noted that teachers do not expect lower achievers to be able to handle comprehension skills, so they don't teach them. This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy when the students do badly on comprehension tests. Area staff also suggested that more sample units should be included in the guides to show teachers how to make adjustments for the lower-achieving groups. Such units are included for the gifted and talented at the other end of the scale. The most frequent comment from the teacher interviews was that these students must stick to the basics, a statement that suggests they viewed the program as at most a

TABLE 8

Appropriateness of Program for All Students

	Percentage answering "Yes, program meets needs of students who are":		
	Above Grade	On Grade	Below Grade
Area Staff	100	100	87
Principals	89	89	61
1&4 Grade Teachers	96	87	56
Other Teachers	88	89	48
Reading Teachers	100	100	38
Media Specialists	67	67	44

TABLE 9

Relationship Between Perceived Appropriateness of Program for All Students and Class Achievement Composition

	Percentage of Teachers		
	In your opinion, does IPR/LA meet the needs of below-grade-level students?		
Class Composition:	Yes	No	Don't Know
Students all above grade	50	0	50
Students all on grade	65	23	12
Students above or on grade	43	43	14
Students include those below grade	43	46	11

supplement for the below-grade-level students.[6]

Teacher's views on whether the curriculum meets the needs of low-achieving students seemed to be associated with the composition of their classrooms. The data presented in Table 9 suggest that teachers with lower-achieving students in their class were more likely to have concerns about the program's appropriateness for the below-grade-level students. Neither the number of years a school had officially been implementing the program nor the amount (number of hours) of training a teacher had received was associated with teachers' views of the program's appropriateness for low achievers.

Observation data broken down by the achievement level of the student reading groups are presented in Tables 10 to 13. In classifying reading groups' achievement levels, the level of the book the group was reading in February was used. Students in pullout ESOL or other resource/special education programs who did not receive regular classroom reading instruction were not included in the observations. As the data in Tables 10 to 13 indicate, in a number of instructional areas important for implementation of the new curriculum, the instruction provided to lower-achieving students was less likely to match up with program characteristics. The amount of time under teacher direction (Tables 12 and 13) is one aspect of instruction where the data reveal considerable variation depending on the reading level of the group to which the student belongs. While the curriculum would encourage more teacher direction generally, at both grade levels a much higher proportion of time was teacher directed for the higher-achieving students. The materials used for reading instruction were also observed to vary depending on the achievement level of the reading group, as well as by grade. Basal readers were generally in use with more groups at first grade which is not surprising. In this grade, however, low achievers were more likely to be found using other teacher-made materials. In the fourth grade, the low achievers used the workbooks and worksheets associated with the basals more of the time and spent 10 percent more time than higher groups using basal readers.

Conversely, tradebooks were used less with the low-achieving students. They were scarcely used at all in the first grade for any groups; however, in the fourth grade the proportion of groups at different achievement levels observed using the tradebooks varied greatly. Only 17 percent of the low-achieving groups were observed with such materials, while 24 percent of the on-grade level groups were observed using tradebooks; and 41 percent of the above-grade-level reading groups used tradebooks (Table 11). Expressed as a proportion of time, the higher achieving groups spent approximately 8 percent more time using such books than the below-grade-level groups (Table 13). Board-mandated exposure to a variety of materials is thus less likely for the lower-achieving students, perhaps reflecting in part the attitudes reported above about the appropriateness of the curriculum for such students.

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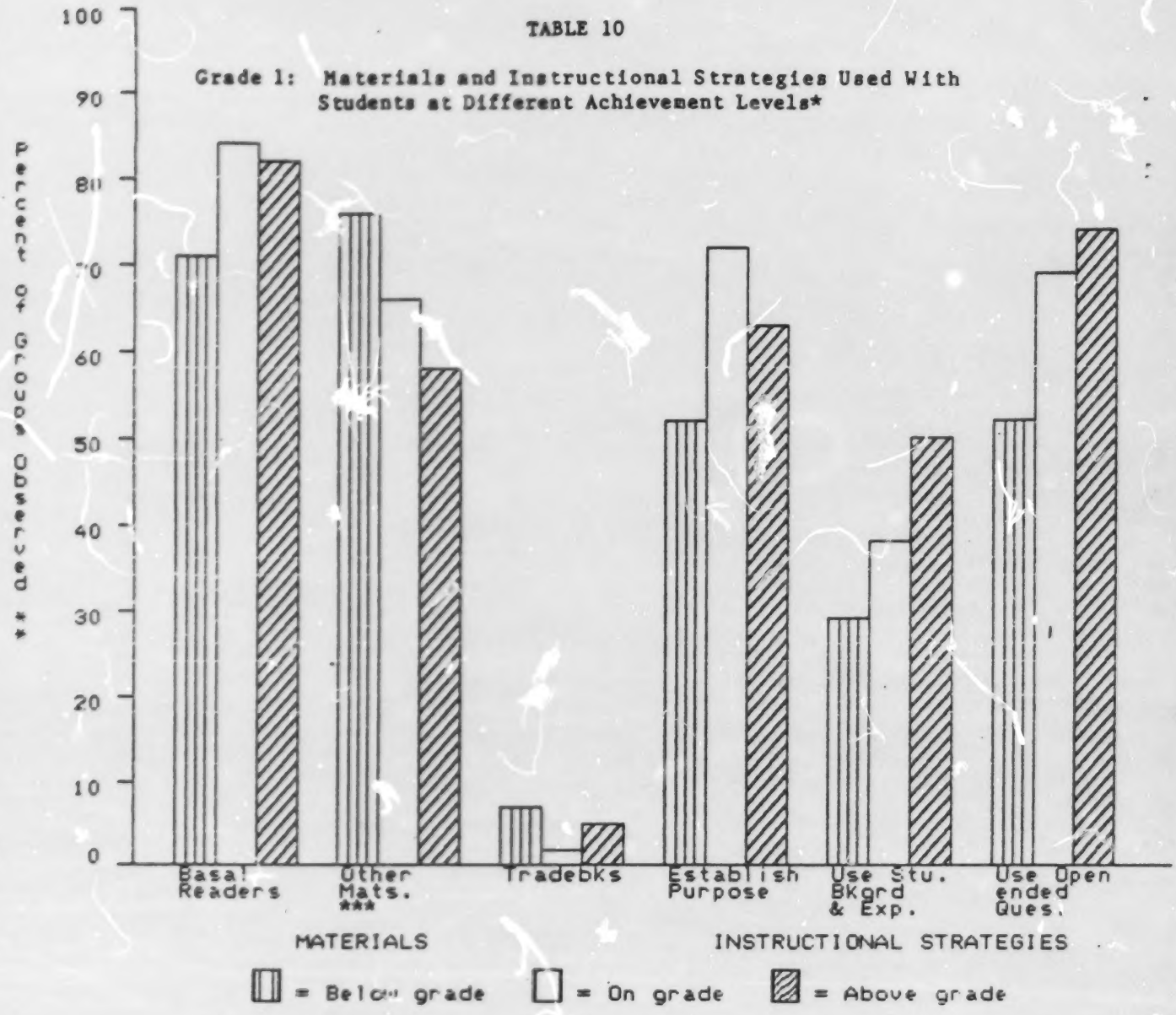
6. Low expectations creating self-fulfilling prophecies, low achievers not being taught certain skills, etc., are phenomena found in many studies of low achievers. See, for example, G.E. Mendels and J.P. Flanders, Teacher Expectations and Pupil Performance. American Research Journal, 1973, 10, 203-212

TABLE 10

Grade 1: Materials and Instructional Strategies Used With Students at Different Achievement Levels*



*In classifying reading groups as above, on, or below grade, information provided by teachers about the reading level of the groups in February was used. Teachers indicated the level of the books the group was reading in and whether they considered the group to be above, on, or below grade.

** This figure represents the proportion of all groups at that level that were observed whose instruction had a particular characteristic. Since the characteristics were not mutually exclusive, the percentages total more than 100 percent.

***Other materials included workbooks, dittos, and teacher-made materials.

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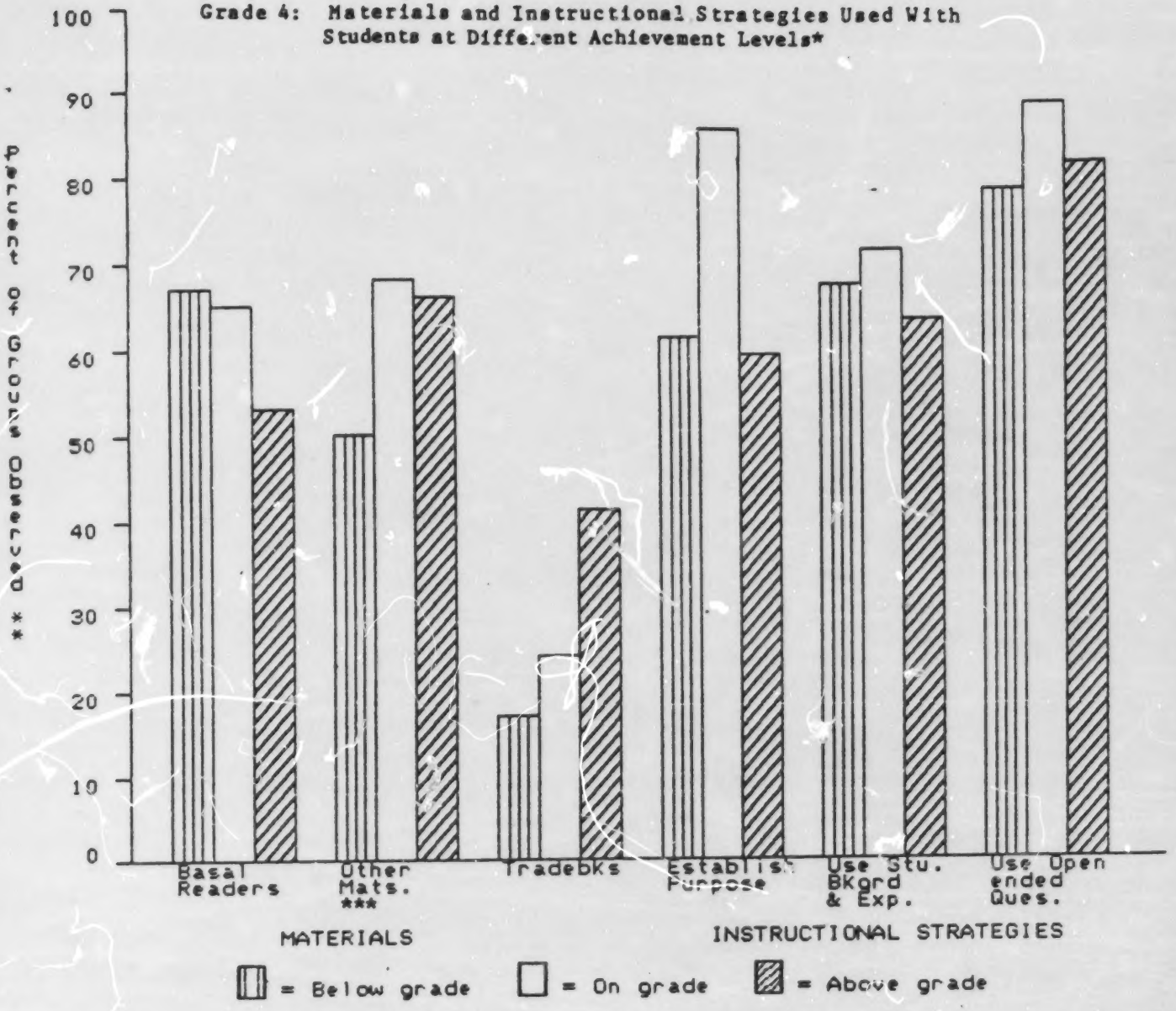
TABLE 11

Grade 4: Materials and Instructional Strategies Used With Students at Different Achievement Levels*



*In classifying reading groups as above, on, or below grade, information provided by teachers about the reading level of the groups in February was used. Teachers indicated the level of the books the group was reading in and whether they considered the group to be above, on, or below grade.

** This figure represents the proportion of all groups at that level that were observed whose instruction had a particular characteristic. Since the characteristics were not mutually exclusive, the percentages total more than 100 percent.

***Other materials included workbooks, dittos, and teacher-made materials.

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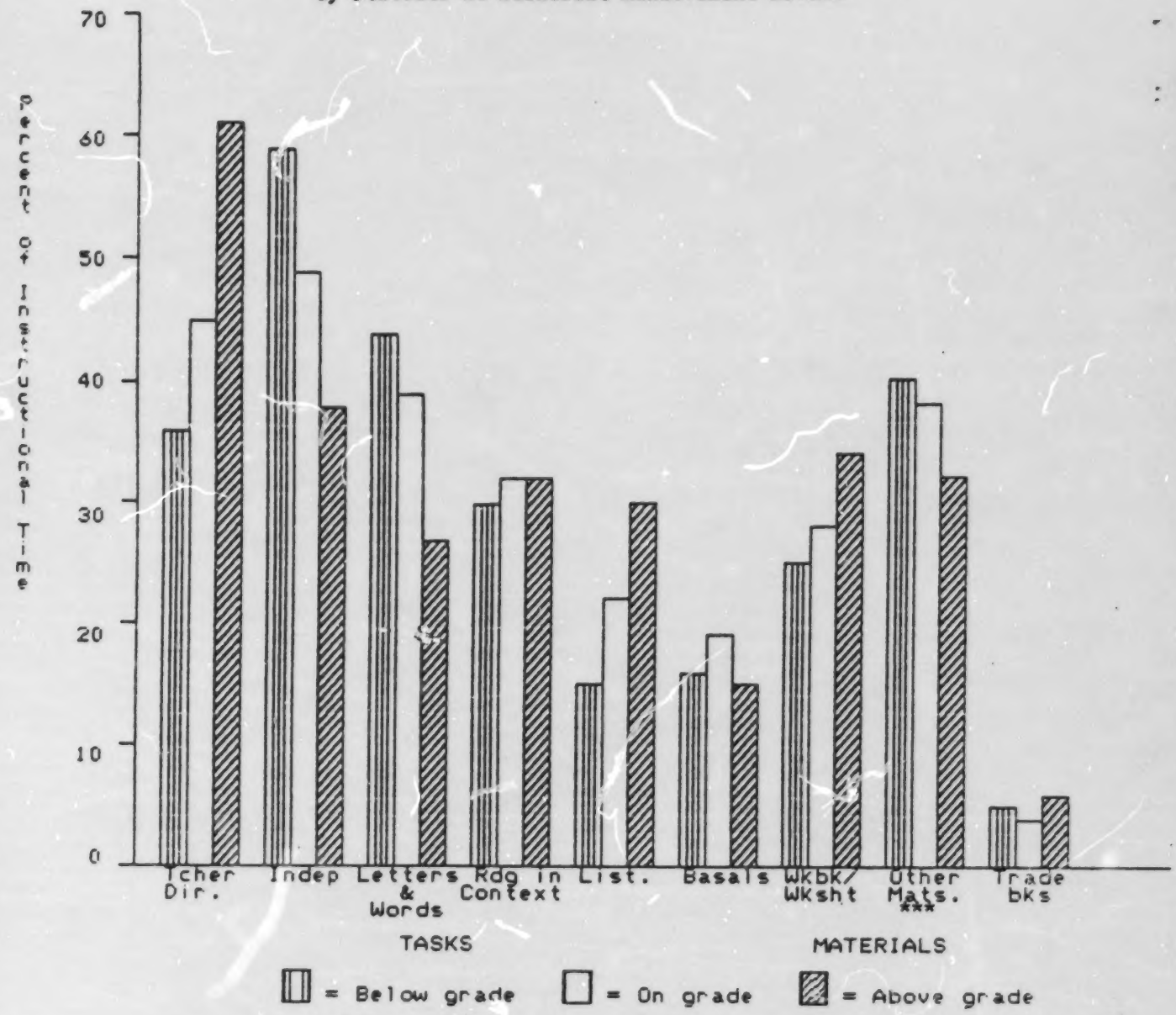
TABLE 12

Grade 1: Characteristics of Instructional Time Spent by Students at Different Achievement Levels*



*In classifying reading groups as above, on, or below grade level, information provided by teachers about the reading level of the groups in February was used. Teachers indicated the level of the book the group was reading in and whether they considered the group to above, on, or below grade level.

**Other materials included board work and teacher-made materials.

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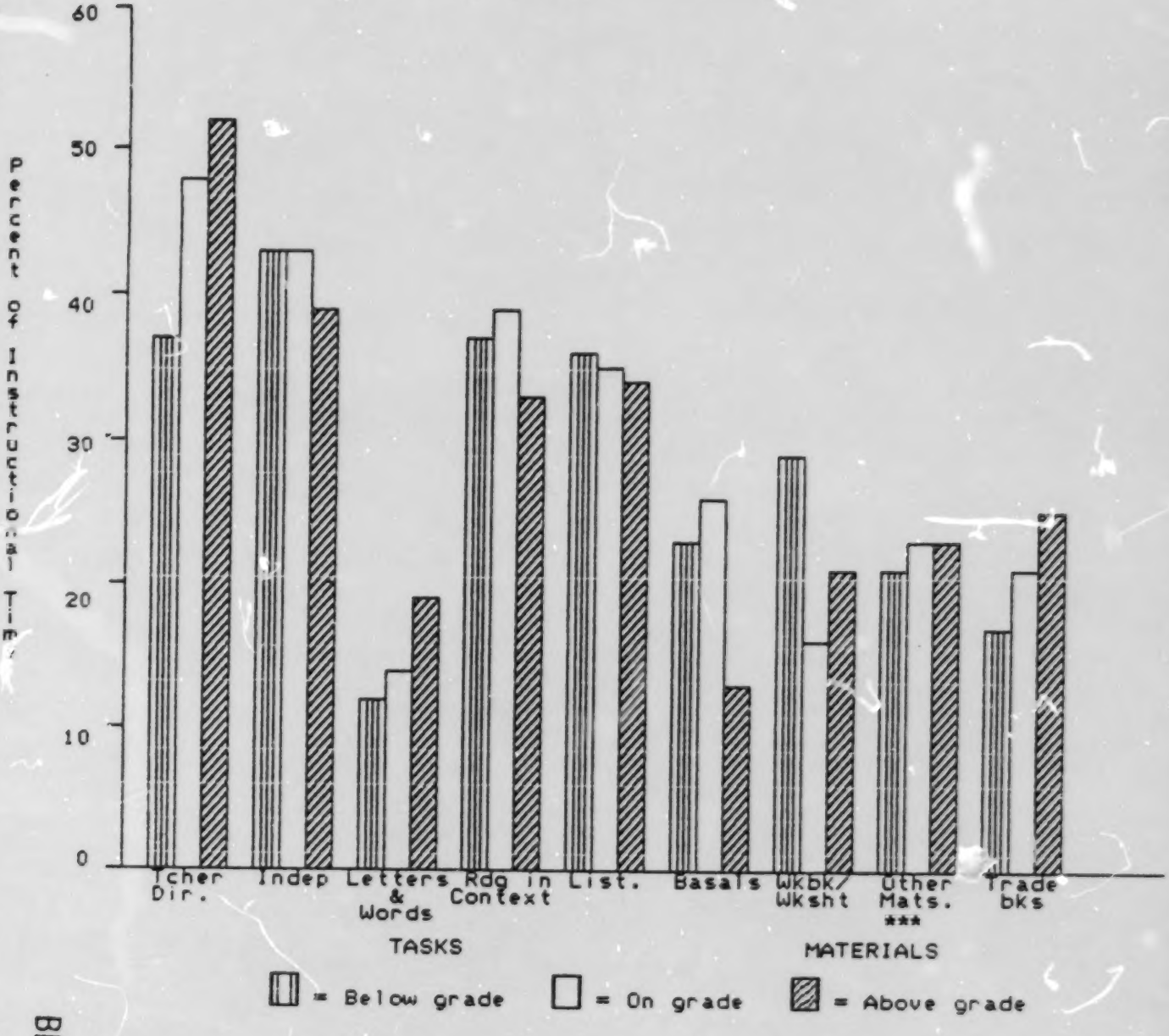
TABLE 13

Grade 4: Characteristics of Instructional Time Spent by Students at Different Achievement Levels*



*In classifying reading groups as above, on, or below grade level, information provided by teachers about the reading level of the groups in February was used. Teachers indicated the level of the book the group was reading in and whether they considered the group to above, on, or below grade level.

**Other materials included board work and teacher-made materials.

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There were also differences in the instructional strategies used with groups at different reading levels in first grade. First grade teachers set a purpose for group instruction with more above- and on-grade-level groups. Teachers also used students' background knowledge and experience less with lower-achieving students. First grade teachers were likely to ask open-ended questions that encourage critical thinking more frequently with the higher- than the lower-achieving reading groups; but at fourth grade, no consistent differences were observed between the use of these strategies with students at different reading achievement levels. The extent to which these strategies would have differed prior to the introduction of IPR/LA is not known.

The data on the differences in the instruction provided to students at different achievement levels should be of considerable concern since the curriculum was intended to be implemented with all students in the county. Overall, approximately 40 percent of the K-8 teachers who responded to interviews and questionnaires had at least some students they considered to be reading below grade level in their class at the beginning of the year.

The data make clear that some teachers were not fully implementing the program with these students; whether they were not doing so because they tried and it didn't work or because of the preexisting attitudes is impossible to tell from study data. Study data from subsequent years may be used to address the question of how performance of low achievers is affected when the curriculum is implemented. Since only 38 percent of the reading teachers who do the in-service training in the schools felt the program met the needs of low achievers, this is a problem of implementation that will not be easily solved. Possible options include more training to convince teachers of the efficacy of the program in its present form with low achievers or the development of adaptations which better meet these students' needs. In addition, this problem raises the management issue of who should be held responsible for ensuring that the Board-mandated program is implemented for <u>all</u> students. The next chapter looks at the role of various levels in the implementation process.

CHAPTER III: SUPPORTING AND MANAGING IMPLEMENTATION

Research on implementation in a variety of areas and types of school systems have all documented the crucial importance of certain management tasks in the success or failure of change efforts. These include at a minimum clearly defining expectations of what is to be done, providing support for the change, and specifying the roles various individuals must play in the implementation process.[7] The Reading Study has collected information on several of these management issues.

While the Department of Academic Skills developed the new curriculum, staff of that department are not directly responsible for its implementation.

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7. For a recent review of the implementation literature, see Susan Loucks-Horsley and Pat L. Cox "It's All in the Doing: What Recent Research Says About Implementation," AERA, New Orleans, April, 1984.

They provide training to area office staff and school-based specialists and consultative services as requested. They also produce a variety of materials to support the reading/language arts program. The area offices are charged with supporting and monitoring the implementation process. Ultimately, it is up to the individual schools to use the new program in the classroom. First-year study data indicate a number of problems in the supports for and management of the program implementation process. These problems appear to have arisen less because of the actions of any one group than because of a lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and expectations. Neither the training nor the materials provided to schools to support the implementation process were perceived as adequate. No consistent criteria were in use systemwide to monitor program implementation. Implementation tasks have created role conflicts for some school-based reading teachers. Details on these findings are presented in the following sections.

SUPPORTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In looking at the availability of the necessary supports for implementation, the concern was the degree to which in-service training and materials were provided to the schools in a sufficient and timely manner. The study found that while both training and materials have been provided to support schools and teachers, the adequacy of these supports was clearly questioned. With regard to training, the study found:

- Many staff and principals felt that the in-service training provided to teachers was not sufficient.
- Approximately half the teachers had received five hours or less of training on the new curriculum.
- First grade teachers and teachers with low-achieving students in their class were more likely to feel the training was insufficient and want additional help.

Data collected on the use of the curriculum materials developed for the program such as the instructional guides, core book lists, and basal correlation sheets suggest a mixed picture. The study found that the curriculum support materials were available and being used in the schools; however, problems persist:

- While almost all teachers were familiar with the instructional guides and found them helpful, 44 percent mentioned problems with their organization and presentation
- Reading teachers and media specialists felt other materials (core book lists and basal correlation sheets), while useful, were too limited in scope.

In-service Training

All respondents were asked a series of questions about the in-service training which has accompanied implementation of the new curriculum. The need for training in the new program existed at all levels in the system. Difficulties arose from efforts to provide training at the same time that

implementation was supposedly taking place and from the assumption that each level would train the one below. In reflecting on the training given to the schools, area staff generally felt that the training they were providing was not sufficient (80%). Supervisors and specialists were assigned to serve so many schools that they did not feel they had adequate time to provide sufficient training for effective implementation. A few area supervisors/specialists felt that principals had not received sufficient training on their role in program implementation, although all principals reported receiving some training on the new curriculum. Area office staff also suggested that teachers need released time to receive in-service training, to visit other classrooms in schools that are successfully implementing the program, to see demonstration lessons, and to interact and exchange ideas with other teachers.

As Table 14 indicates, most teachers felt that the in-service training provided had been useful. In the interviews, 56 percent of the first and fourth grade teachers reported the training they received was not sufficient. Questionnaire data from other classroom teachers indicate 25 percent of these teachers also felt the training was insufficient to successfully implement the program. While the data, therefore, indicate differences among respondents about the sufficiency of the training per se, many respondents commented on the need for other emphases in the training. The training received most frequently consisted of reviewing objectives and materials, assembling the instructional guides or placing index tabs in the guides, and being given an overview of instructional approaches. Many teachers wanted additional help in the form of demonstrations and workshops, as Table 14 indicates. In addition, both area staff and teachers (in interview comments) frequently noted the superficial and procedural nature of much of this training and the need to provide a better understanding of the conceptual basis for the curriculum and the purpose of changes in instructional practices. Comments written on school reading teacher questionnaires suggest that in a few cases, reading teachers felt insufficiently prepared to offer much substantive training to teachers, hence the focus on the organization of the guide and reviewing the objectives. In other cases, reading teachers indicated they reviewed just about every aspect of the curriculum in the training they provided, but given the available time, this could hardly be anything but superficial.

Forty-nine percent of the teachers had received five hours or less of training on the new curriculum, 34 percent had 6 to 10 hours, and 15 percent had received more than 10 hours of in-service training on the program. As might be expected, the number of hours of training was positively associated with teachers' perceptions of the need for additional help or whether or not they considered the training sufficient (see Table 15). Two other factors besides amount of training also seemed to be related to teachers' feelings about the in-service training they had received. These factors were grade level and class composition. The first grade teachers interviewed were less likely than the fourth grade teachers to feel that they had received sufficient training (36% versus 51%). The first grade teachers did receive less training; 58 percent of those interviewed had received less than 5 hours of training, while only 37 percent of the fourth grade teachers had five hours or less. First grade teachers may also have had greater difficulties in using the curriculum (i.e., teachers have traditionally relied more on the basal and phonics at that level, so the curriculum represents more of a change in focus). When teachers were classified

TABLE 14

In-service Training of School Staff

	Percentage Answering Yes*					
	1-4 Grade Teachers	Other Teachers	Reading Teachers	Media Spec.	Resource Teachers	Spec. Ed. Teachers
Received training	97	91	100	100	74	95
Training helpful	94		85	89	68	75
Training sufficient	44	75	50	65	71	40
Need additional help:	51					
Materials		73				85
Demonstrations		69				65
Opportunities to visit classes		53				70
Extra learning time		89				75
Sessions with specialist		51				65
In-service workshops		46				80
MCPS courses		41				40

*Blanks indicate the question and response were not included in the instruments for those respondents. In the interviews, the question was open-ended and the responses included the categories in the table.

TABLE 15

Hours of Training

	Percentage of teachers			
Number of Hours of Training Received	Training Sufficient: Yes	No	Need Additional Help: Yes	No
5 or less	32	68	64	36
6 - 10	46	54	50	50
10+	73	27	33	67

according to the achievement level composition of their class, those with students in their class who were below grade level in reading were more likely to feel that the in-service training they received was insufficient and to want additional help (see Table 16). As discussed above, instruction to below-grade-level students was less likely to reflect the curriculum. Combined with the information on training needs, this certainly suggests that the teachers with lower achieving students found the curriculum more difficult to implement than those whose students were on or above grade level.

Curriculum Materials

Aside from in-service training, the major support for schools and teachers in the process of implementing the new reading/language arts curriculum is the provision of various support materials for the program. These materials include the program overview manual, the instructional guides, the scope and sequence charts, the core book lists, and the basal correlation sheets. In general, the various materials are available in the schools and are being utilized by teachers. When asked, teachers reported that they found them helpful. However, many teachers are not satisfied with particular aspects of the instructional guides, the core book lists, and the basal correlation sheets.

The instructional guides provide the major support for the program. These include specification of the program's performance objectives, a description of the various forms of discourse, and some sample lessons of various types. These were only intended to be suggestive of types of instructional units teachers could and should develop for the program. The program developers intended for teachers to adapt the units to meet the needs of the particular students in their class and to develop new units for their own use.

While teachers generally indicated familiarity with these guides, the level of their use may vary more than the data suggest. Teacher comments about problems with the curriculum frequently focused on the guides, suggesting their importance to the implementation process. Forty-four percent of the teachers interviewed mentioned some problems with the use of the guides. Poor organization of the guides was the most common concern. There is no index by objectives so that the teacher can quickly locate materials and units designed to cover particular objectives. The lack of an index and the continuing piecemeal distribution of new units, other inserts, revisions, etc., as well as the fact that much of the material continued to be labeled "draft" which created an impression of carelessness and raised questions in the minds of school staff about the priority to be given to program implementation. One respondent characterized this process as the "dribble approach" to implementation. This combined with print for many portions of the guides that virtually all respondents found forbiddingly small did not enhance their use. While area staff commented that better packaging would help "sell" the program, many also felt that additional units needed to be generated in an ongoing fashion so that the system did not have to rely on every teacher developing his/her own lessons but could choose from those available. Within an area, exemplary lesson units developed by one teacher may get passed along informally through the network of area teacher specialists; but there is no formal means for making such units available to all teachers.

TABLE 16

Class Composition and Training Needs

	Percentage of Teachers			
	Training Sufficient:		Need Additional Help:	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
First Grade:				
No below-grade-level students	55	45	43	57
Below-grade-level students in class	34	66	59	41
Fourth Grade:				
All students above grade level	100			100
All students on grade level	60	40	20	80
Students on/above grade level	78	22	38	62
Students include below grade level	33	67	59	41
All students below grade level	0	100	100	0

Respondents also noted some problems with the core book lists and the basal correlation sheets. The core list provides a set of recommended tradebooks with different forms of discourse for different reading levels for each grade and is supposed to be used in conjunction with the guides by teachers in planning instruction. Area staff in the interviews strongly recommended the need to continually update and to expand the core book list to improve its usefulness. Over 60 percent of the reading teachers and media specialists mentioned that the list was out of date or did not include enough books for different reading levels or different forms of discourse. The basal correlation sheets were designed to show how the program objectives can be interfaced with basal reader stories. While most area staff felt these were helpful, several supervisors questioned whether the sheets only reinforced teachers' use of basals. The correlation sheets were not available for all series nor apparently in all schools; school reading teachers must request a copy from area staff. Fifty-nine percent of the teachers interviewed were aware of the availability of the sheets, although 84 percent of the reading teachers indicated they used the sheets. Area teacher specialists noted in the interviews that the sheets need to be prepared for more basal series and that more copies are needed to distribute to schools.[8]

MANAGING IMPLEMENTATION

In order for the new curriculum to be implemented in classrooms, both the area offices and schools must assume certain responsibilities for managing the implementation process. As noted above, DAS can develop and recommend the use of curriculum tests, record systems, or other support materials, but it is the area associate superintendents who have authority to establish requirements. While the study found implementation problems existed across areas, even within one area, standards and requirements might vary depending on the elementary school supervisor and the teacher-specialist assigned to a particular school. Much of the implementation research confirms that managing implementation requires "forceful leadership...that sets clear expectations of what is to be done by whom with what effect."[9] Data were collected during the first year of the study on how the implementation process is monitored and the management responsibilities of staff at various levels. The study found problems in these areas:

- Ad hoc and individual criteria for monitoring implementation were in use but no overall standards were applied.

- School reading teachers have a role conflict between providing direct instruction versus serving as a resource to teachers and assisting principals in implementation.

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8. Publishers are requested to prepare the sheets for all new series approved; otherwise, it is up to area offices to prepare the sheets.

9. Loucks-Horsley, op cit., p. 9.

Monitoring

Data from the first year of the study indicate that neither the criteria for monitoring nor who monitors has been clearly defined with respect to the new curriculum. At the time of the interviews for the study, what was considered evidence of implementation appeared to be an individual decision for each supervisor and/or teacher specialist. No overall summary measure of the level of implementation was being used. Several supervisors mentioned the need for a checklist or guide indicating those specific features that would reflect implementation of the new curriculum such as teacher use of trade books and other materials, use of instructional units, use of required forms of discourse, and use of planning sheets. Such a checklist would be useful to both area staff and principals for monitoring purposes. The development of such a checklist was in progress in at least one area by the end of the summer of 1983. Because of the area administrative structure, there was no efficient means to share materials developed in one area with staff in the other areas.

While area supervisors are formally responsible for monitoring the implementation of the reading curriculum in the schools assigned to them, several indicated that they rely heavily on the information supplied by the teacher specialists who serve their schools. Not all supervisors of elementary instruction are specialists in reading. While all reported receiving useful in-service training from Central Office staff and in area in-service workshops, several felt the program required a great deal of independent review of the materials in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the program. In addition, several supervisors felt the need for additional training for all supervisors directed to their role in monitoring the program and suggested indicators of implementation.

Area supervisors noted that since many aspects of the curriculum were recommended and not required it was difficult to know what features were critical to the implementation process. Their lack of clarity was evidently communicated to the principals with which they worked. While 94 percent of the principals thought the area office monitored implementation, few had any idea of what specific indicators area staff used to check the level of implementation in their school. This ambiguity about just what was being monitored also conveyed a message about the importance of program implementation. Indeed, 50 percent of the principals indicated in the interviews that IPR/LA was not the reading program but was added to the traditional program or used as a supplement. Several of the area respondents felt implementation was not taken seriously precisely because no clear statement of required program components was available. "Higher levels" must "lay it on the line" that this is the mandated reading program and that it will "not go away." "A firmer commitment is necessary from the Central Office in order for implementation to be taken seriously."

Data from the school staff interviews indicate similar confusions over who has monitoring responsibilities and what were the indicators of implementation within schools. While 89 percent of the principals claimed they shared responsibility for monitoring implementation with the school reading teacher, only 24 percent of the reading teachers included monitoring as one of their duties in implementing the program. In addition, while 94 percent of the principals stated that they reviewed teacher plans as indicators of program implementation, only 13 percent of the teachers

interviewed thought their instructional plans were used to monitor implementation.

Staff Roles

Aside from the problems created by the ambiguity in criteria for monitoring implementation, the data suggest that the process has also led to some concern over the roles of particular staff and changes resulting from implementation. Several area staff expressed concern during the interviews about changes in the role of the reading teacher. These respondents felt the "old" guidelines for reading teachers no longer fit. Reading teachers may now be expected to be part of an implementation team and to serve as a resource/support to teachers, thus leaving less time for direct instruction. The problem is even greater when the reading teacher is less than full time, as they face the difficult task of responding to curriculum demands as well as tutoring students in an even more limited time span. According to several area staff, the role of the reading teacher must be re-examined, re-defined and updated to reflect the demands of the new reading curriculum.

As noted above, the reading teachers were less likely to acknowledge a monitoring role, perhaps because it did not fit with the accepted definition of their role but placed them in an awkward position between the principal as supervisor and the teachers as colleagues. At any rate, both classroom teachers (77%) and principals (89%) did perceive the reading teachers as involved in monitoring. In part, principals may have been reflecting a desire to be able to rely on the reading teacher to assume some of these implementation tasks, especially if the principal was unfamiliar with the program or uncomfortable as an instructional leader in reading/language arts. Principals who shared monitoring and program coordination with the reading teacher were more likely to think the reading teacher's role had changed and to see his/her main role more as a resource rather than one that provides instruction (see Table 17).

There is general agreement among respondents that the reading teacher has an expanded resource support role. Ninety-four percent of the classroom teachers interviewed said that the reading teacher acted as a resource, while 65 percent indicated that the reading teacher provided direct instruction to their students. Reading teachers themselves affirmed that their allocation of time had changed. Sixty-two percent indicated that they spent less time on direct instruction now and more on serving as a resource as a result of the new curriculum. However, 81 percent of the reading teachers still indicated that direct instruction took up the largest proportion of their time, with 62 percent stating that acting as a resource was the second most time-consuming activity. Subsequent data collection should allow more detailed exploration of the changes occurring in the reading teacher's role because of the program.

IMPLICATIONS

The problems in implementation of the reading/language arts program have implications at two levels: for the curriculum itself, and for the general process of curriculum implementation and improvement in MCPS.

TABLE 17

Principals' Views of Reading Teacher Role

	Percentage of Principals Reporting That	
	Reading teacher role changed: Yes	No
Reading teacher monitors:		
Yes	53	47
No	0	100

	Reading teacher's main role is:	
	Direct Instruction	Resource
Reading teacher coordinates:		
Yes	17	83
No	58	42

IPR/LA Implementation

First, with respect to IPR/LA implementation itself, a number of implications can be drawn from the specific study findings. These concern instructional practice, use of tests, in-service training and support materials, and program monitoring.

Some, but not all, aspects of instructional practice matched the Board-mandated Program of Studies. Continued effort is needed in order to increase the use of these practices. The issue is of particular concern for low-achieving students. Teachers have not been convinced that the program is appropriate for low achievers. The instruction provided to these students was less likely to match program standards than that provided to higher achievers. Since the curriculum was mandated by the Board for all students, a greater effort needs to be made to provide adaptations which better meet these students' needs, to convince teachers of the efficacy of the program in its present form with low achievers, or to improve management procedures.

The purpose of the curriculum tests and the procedures for their use are not well understood. These ambiguities as well as the lack of a record-keeping system have resulted in a mixed message about the need to assess performance on curriculum objectives. These problems will be remedied in large part by the inclusion of these tests in the mandated annual testing program initiated this spring and the provision of a record-keeping system for use with the program, which is expected to be available in 1984-85. Continued efforts need to be directed, however, toward helping schools understand how to use the data produced by the tests.

Neither in-service training nor support materials have been adequate. While a specific number of additional hours cannot be recommended, more and/or improved training is clearly needed, especially on how to adapt and use the program with low achievers. In addition, teachers want a better understanding of program principles and more practical demonstration of classroom procedures using the new program. Training should include assistance to teachers in adapting and developing new lessons based on the program objectives. Support materials need to be improved to increase their usefulness: instructional guides should be indexed by objectives, and core-book lists and basal correlation sheets should be updated and expanded.

A clear statement of what should happen in the classroom is also necessary for effective monitoring of program implementation. Principals and teachers need a list of specific program components (type of plans required, appropriate instructional practices, use of tradebooks) to use in assessing the progress of implementation. However, unless this results in a statement of required program components, implementation may continue to be piecemeal.

Curriculum Implementation in MCPS

Problems such as those mentioned above are not unique to Montgomery County, and time alone does not provide a cure. Study after study has documented innovative ideas that were developed but never implemented in any but a superficial way. It has become clear that program implementation is, under the best of circumstances, difficult and must be carefully orchestrated if

it is to succeed. It is time to take a very serious look at how MCPS goes about the program implementation task, as this is only one of a series of studies in which implementation problems have been found. DEA studies in other program areas (the Instructional System in Mathematics, career education, gifted and talented) have documented similar problems in the implementation process. In MCPS, curriculum development, monitoring, and instruction have been separated, and there are no systematic procedures in place for curriculum implementation that tie the various elements together. Collegial monitoring and good will are not sufficient to accomplish implementation. Without systematic procedures which both support and enforce implementation, the result is Board-approved programs that are never fully implemented.

Program implementation is a complex process. Table 18 provides an example of the various stages/activities in the implementation process as identified in recent research (Loucks-Horsley, 1984). While it is certainly not necessary to follow each step to the letter, the model is itself informative and contrasts sharply with practice typical of MCPS. MCPS has a number of curriculum reform efforts in various stages of dissemination in the schools. In the English Language Arts, the writing and speaking program is currently being piloted,[10] and plans call for broader implementation next year. Before such expansion is scheduled, DEA feels it is critical that a complete, multiyear plan for implementation be prepared. Rather than continue with the "dribble" approach to program implementation that has been characteristic to date, it is time to take a more systematic approach to the problem. Without systematic procedures for implementation that specify responsibilities, establish requirements, and provide resources, there is no reason to expect that the writing program will fare any better than those examined to date.

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10. Approved by the Board of Education on May 21, 1984.

TABLE 18

Implementation Activities

Initiation Phase

Assessing needs, strengths, and resources
Assessing current practice
Setting clear goals, objectives, and expectations
Selecting or developing a new practice
Creating awareness
Assigning roles and responsibilities
Establishing commitment
Developing game plans
Allocating resources
Providing materials
Arranging training
Making schedule and organizational changes in school
Helping teachers plan implementation

Implementation Phase

Initial training
Problem-solving and trouble-shooting
Providing follow-up training
Monitoring classrooms for use
Evaluating implementation outcomes
Evaluating ultimate outcomes

Institutionalization Phase

Training new or reassigned staff
Conducting follow-up and refresher sessions
Incorporating program into curriculum guidelines
Routinely purchasing new materials and supplies
Establishing a budget-line item

Source: Loucks-Horsley, op. cit, p. 14

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS

Reading study staff collected information from sample schools and area personnel during the first year of the study (1982-83). In the fall, interviews were conducted with principals, first- and fourth-grade teachers, and area staff. The interview guides were designed to elicit parallel information from the different administrative and teaching staff involved in implementing the program. The topics covered included planning, in-service training, the role of school-based specialists in implementation, the use of curriculum support materials, instructional practices in reading, and changes due to the curriculum, attitudes towards the program, and its appropriateness for students at all achievement levels. While question responses were close-ended where possible based on pilot study information, many questions in the interview guides were open-ended to allow respondents to elaborate on their perceptions of the program and its impact. Separate interview guides were developed for each of the respondents: area supervisors of elementary instruction, area teacher specialists, principals, and the classroom teachers. The interviews each took approximately 45 minutes to one hour. All respondents were provided with a copy of the interview guide in advance of the interview. In addition, to minimize teacher burden, a substitute was provided for each teacher's class while the teacher was being interviewed.

Supplementary questionnaires were given to the rest of the classroom teachers in the sample schools as well as to school specialists in February. These instruments covered the same topics but in less depth, using a fixed response format. Separate questionnaire forms were developed for each of the different respondents: classroom teachers, school reading teachers, media specialists, special education resource room teachers, and special education teachers. Questionnaires were estimated to take approximately 30 minutes to complete by the respondent. The forms were sent to participating school principals to distribute to staff, collect, and return to DEA. Table A-1 lists the instruments, number of respondents, and response rates. Although the questions were similarly phrased, the differences in format, procedure, and timing (February vs. November) necessitate separate reporting of responses from the interview and questionnaire data.

These forms were used in the eighteen schools in the sample that had begun to implement the program. In the two nonimplementing schools, brief interviews were conducted with principals and a short questionnaire was distributed to all classroom teachers. These instruments omitted the questions about program implementation and only asked for some baseline information on reading instruction practices. Since both of the nonimplementing schools in the sample had experienced some consolidation, a number of the classroom teachers actually had had experience implementing the program in their previous schools. Classroom practice information collected from these schools could thus not be interpreted as evidence of reading instructional practices prior to implementation of IPR/LA.

In order to get a clearer picture of instructional practices, classroom observations were also conducted in sample classrooms. Reading instruction was observed during three time periods (fall, winter, and spring) in the first- and fourth-grade classrooms in the study. Two separate observation procedures were used in order to minimize teacher burden and yet capture

TABLE A-1

Data Collection Instruments and Respondents

Instruments	Number	Response Rate (Percentage)
Supervisor of Elementary Instruction Interview Guide	9	100
Area Teacher Specialist Interview Guide	6	100
Elementary School Principal Interview Guide	18	100
Elementary Classroom Teacher Interview Guide	71	100
Elementary Classroom Teacher Questionnaire	184	93
School-based Reading Teacher Questionnaire	21	100
Media Specialist Questionnaire	18	100
School-based Special Education Resource Room Teacher Questionnaire	20	95
Elementary Special Education Teacher Questionnaire	21	95

both teaching behaviors and student instruction received: an "in-depth" and a "snapshot" observation. The in-depth instrument was designed for group/whole class observations and was used to code teaching behaviors for an entire reading period while instruction was taking place under teacher direction. The shapshot instrument was designed to observe individual students and was used to code student behaviors for a five-minute period regardless of whether the student was under teacher direction. A copy of each instrument and the definitions of terms used in coding is included at the end of this appendix. Although it was stressed that the observations were intended to assist in program evaluation and not assessment of the quality of individual teaching, the procedures caused considerable anxiety.

The in-depth instruments was used in one first and one fourth-grade classroom in each of the sample schools three times during the school year. The observer remained in the classroom for the entire reading period, "joining" all reading groups that the teacher instructed during that period. The actual time spent in each classroom varied depending on the length of time individual teachers allocated for reading instruction. The instrument used by the observer lists nineteen different teaching behaviors/strategies divided into the following six areas: Vocabulary Development, Comprehension, Decoding/Structural Analysis, Materials, Instructional Practices/Management, and Interest and Motivation. These were selected to reflect aspects of instruction likely to be affected by implementation of the new curriculum. An open-ended section at the end of the instrument was provided for comments relating to classroom displays and grouping practices. The observer coded whether each behavior had occurred or not separately for each of the reading groups in the class. There are no timing procedures associated with this instrument.

The alternative "snapshot" procedure was used in the other first- and fourth-grade classrooms in the study. In these classes, a students was randomly selected from each of the reading groups to represent students in that group. These target students were observed for five minutes three times during each of the observation periods, nine times during the entire year. The number of students per classroom varied depending on the number of reading groups and ranged from one to six. The observer remained in the classroom for part of the reading period following individuals students. The instrument used for this observation procedure contains nineteen behaviors grouped into four observation categories for which individual students were to be coded: Task-attending Behaviors, Work Setting, Reading Instructional Task, and Materials. These were selected as descriptive of the basic elements of reading instruction regardless of curriculum. As noted above, this was a timed observation. The observer coded each target student in the areas mentioned once every 15 seconds for a period of five minutes (20 observations).

Although the observations were unannounced within the specified time periods in the fall, winter, and spring, the observers needed to know the individual teachers' schedules for instruction to plan observation visits. In addition, the number of reading groups and the students in each had to be determined in order to select students for the "snapshots." Teachers were therefore asked to fill out forms providing information on their reading instruction schedule for each of the six-week periods as well as a roster listing the students in their class by reading group. Teachers were asked to number the groups in order by reading achievement level, so that this

information could be used to group the observation data. Since the top group in one class could be at a different level from the top group in another class, at the end of the year, supplementary information on the reading level and grade level (on, above, or below) of each group was obtained from teachers. It should be noted that observations were limited to students receiving regular reading instruction in the classroom; pullout instruction for whatever purpose (remedial, gifted and talented, ESOL, etc.) was not observed, and the observation data, therefore, cannot be used to characterize such instruction. Obtaining accurate schedules for reading instruction for a six-week period in advance proved quite difficult. An unanticipated study observation has been the complexity of elementary school schedules and the extent to which instruction is continuously interrupted for various special events—field trips, assemblies, swimming, parties for every conceivable holiday.

Seven observers were selected to conduct the observations for the Reading Study. All had extensive classroom experience and either a Master's degree in reading or special training and experience as a classroom observer. The seven observers each were responsible for observing classrooms in two or three schools. The observers participated in a training session in October 1982 to prepare for the observations. During the workshop, the study design was reviewed, the curriculum guides for grades one and four were examined, the observation instruments were reviewed and explained in detail, and assignments were made. Individual observers were responsible for developing their own schedule for conducting the observations. With the exception of one teacher who was excused from the observations because of personal problems, all the selected classes were observed at least once during each time period; only a few observations were not completed because of scheduling difficulties.

The observation instruments were intended to describe instruction and minimize the extent to which observer judgment was needed. Nevertheless, some judgment was obviously necessary. To assure quality control for the study, frequent contact was maintained with the observers, and special procedures were used to ensure that interrater reliability remained high. In order to check interrater reliability, the Reading Study observation supervisor joined each observer for each type of observation in November, February, and May. These joint observations were conducted in all 20 schools in the study. Both the supervisor and the observer coded simultaneously, and then percent agreement was calculated using the supervisor's coding as the standard. For the in-depth instrument, the average reliability across the observers was 90 percent in November, 88 percent in February, and 89 percent in May. For the snapshot instrument, the average reliability was only slightly less: 86 percent in November, 87 percent in February, and 87 percent in May.

This joint coding procedure allowed the supervisor and the observers to pinpoint coding problems as they occurred and making corrections as they went along. In general, the in-depth procedure presented fewer difficulties than the snapshot procedure. Since the in-depth coding was not timed, the observers had ample opportunity to reflect on teaching throughout the entire reading period rather than brief moments with individual students. Observers also found it easier to join reading groups working under the teacher's direction in one area of the room than to observe target students working in a variety of settings in many areas throughout the room. In

addition, because of transitions, the snapshot observations took more than five minutes of elapsed time to record five minutes of instruction. Thus, teachers observed with this procedure had an observer in their classroom for a longer period of time than anticipated. Nevertheless, the reliability for both instruments was about the same. For both instruments, where the reliability checks or the feedback meetings with observers indicated ambiguities or problems in interpreting the data, these observation categories were not included in the report.

Student data were also collected in first and fourth grades. To provide baseline information on global reading skills, an individually administered reading test (the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test) was given to first graders in the fall, and fourth graders took the California Achievement Test (Reading Subtests). Testers hired by DEA or the school reading teacher gave the Woodcock test, and student data were left with the schools to use as they wished. Scores on the criterion-referenced tests in narration administered by schools in October and January were supplied to DEA by DAS. As part of the study, fourth-grade teachers were also asked in the fall to administer a brief (16 items) inventory of reading attitudes to their students. Answer sheets were submitted to DEA and school-level summary scores were later returned to the schools. The inventory was not felt to be appropriate for first graders.

To assess some additional reading skills not included on the curriculum tests and to provide an end-or-year measure of student performance, DEA developed a separate criterion-referenced test for first and fourth grade. To ensure uniformity of administration of these new tests and to ease the burden on the schools, DEA staff went to the schools to administer the tests. Scoring took place over the summer, and the schools received reports on the results in September, 1983. Additional data on student attitudes were collected from a subsample of first- and fourth-grade parents in the study schools through a telephone survey. The student data collected in the first year is intended primarily as baseline information to be used in conjunction with successive years' data to measure student growth and relate gains to program implementation. These data have been returned to the schools for their use and will be used in subsequent analyses, but they are not included in the first-year report.

952b/app.doc

School _____ Date _____

Teacher _____ Observer/Rater _____

Grade _____ Start/Stop Time Observed _____

Number of Reading Groups on Roster _____
(If "0" please explain)

TEACHING BEHAVIORS OBSERVED DURING READING PERIOD

DIRECTIONS: Consider today's classroom experience. Concentrate on the teaching behaviors observed during the reading period. Indicate whether you observed the particular behaviors listed by checking the appropriate box next to each statement for each group observed. Please put a zero when behavior is not observed. If there is whole class instruction for the reading period, code behaviors observed in column 1 of observational form and note that on this form. Please note comment section at the end of the observation instrument.

I. VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

	Reading Groups			
	1	2	3	4
a. Teacher presents and develops selected words for reading and/or listening lesson in meaningful context.	___	___	___	___
b. Teacher presents selected words visually.	___	___	___	___
c. Teacher encourages student use of selected words in class discussions.	___	___	___	___

II. COMPREHENSION

	Reading Groups 1	2	3	4
a. Teacher clearly establishes purpose for reading, and/or listening. (i.e., read this selection to find out, listen for rhyming words in selection.)	___	___	___	___
b. Teacher uses open-ended questioning strategies that promote critical thinking and discussion. (i.e. "How", and "Why" questions)	___	___	___	___
Specify some examples of questions: _____				
_____				
_____				
c. Teacher encourages students to refer back to selection to prove/justify answers. (i.e., find the sentence which gave you the clue)	___	___	___	___
d. Teacher encourages students to predict while reading a selection. (i.e., "What do you think will happen next? Why do you think . . . .?")	___	___	___	___
e. Teacher relates reading text to student's prior background knowledge and experience. (i.e., "Did you ever ...?", "Has anyone ever been to ...?," or "How would you feel if it happened to you?")	___	___	___	___

III. DECODING/STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

	Reading Groups 1	2	3	4
a. Teacher uses isolated phonic drills to help students decode unfamiliar words (i.e. letter/sound relationships taught in isolation-no context)	___	___	___	___
b. Teacher use context clues to help students decode unfamiliar words. (i.e., letter/sound relationship taught using context sentences, paragraphs, whole stories)	___	___	___	___

IV. MATERIALS

	Reading Groups 1	2	3	4
a. Teacher uses basal readers during the reading period.	___	___	___	___
b. Teacher uses tradebooks during the reading period.	___	___	___	___

Specify book(s): _____

_____

_____

c. Teacher uses content textbooks during the reading period	___	___	___	___

Specify book(s): _____

_____

_____

d. Teacher uses materials other than basal readers textbooks, tradebooks during the reading period. (i.e., language experience stories, ditto sheets)	___	___	___	___

Specify materials: _____

_____

_____

V. INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES/MANAGEMENT

	Reading Groups 1	2	3	4
a. Teacher uses "wait time" strategy (i.e., teacher allows at least five seconds between question and responses and/or between responses and asking next question.)	___	___	___	___
b. Teacher assumes a central/active role in providing reading instruction. (i.e., teacher directed instruction)	___	___	___	___
c. Teacher involves more than half the students in discussion and encourages active participation of students.	___	___	___	___
d. Teacher uses enrichment/extending activities related to reading/language arts to provide for creative interpretation (i.e. dramatize story, make poster of favorite character's adventure, rewrite story with new ending, construct mural or model of. . .)	___	___	___	___

Specify activities: _____

_____

_____

VI. INTEREST AND MOTIVATION

	Reading Groups 1	2	3	4
a. Teacher creates an interest and motivation for the reading lesson.	___	___	___	___

COMMENTS: Reflect on the classroom experience immediately following the observational period. Please comment briefly on each of the following areas as they relate to today's reading period.

In area a., "Attentiveness of groups during instruction," please note whether students, in general, were on-task in their reading group. On-task behaviors include such behaviors as: listening attentively to the teacher, responding to questions, asking questions, etc. Off-task behaviors include such behaviors as: gazing out the window, nudging a peer, whispering to a peer, etc.

In area b., "Language instruction integrated with content subjects," please note whether the teacher provided any reading skill instruction to help students read and understand social studies, science, math, etc. materials during the reading period.

In area c., "Graphic displays and/or verbal expressions related to the MCPS Reading/Language Arts Program," please note whether IPR/LA objectives, vocabulary terms (i.e., discourse, narration, exposition), materials (i.e., multiple copies of tradebooks), charts or diagrams (i.e., webbing, story structure-character, plot setting) are evident in classroom displays or whether the teacher uses concepts/terms from the curriculum (i.e. character trait, setting, conflict, resolution).

In area d., "Changes in the instructional groupings," please note whether there was any variation/flexibility in instructional groupings during the reading period (i.e., whole class, small groups, individuals, heterogeneous and homogeneous groups).

In area e., "Variation in length/type of reading materials for different ability groups, please note whether there was variation in the amount of content covered (number of pages) and the types of materials used for the varying ability groups.

In area f., "Reading skills covered during instruction," please note specific areas of instruction (i.e., vocabulary development, comprehension, decoding, etc.) covered during the reading periods, regardless of whether specific behaviors were observed in those areas.

a. Attentiveness of groups during instruction _____

_____

_____

_____

b. Language instruction integrated with content subjects _____

c. Graphic displays and/or verbal expressions related to the MCPS Reading/Language Arts Program _____

d. Changes in the instructional groupings _____

e. Variation in length/type of reading materials for different ability groups _____

f. Reading skills covered during instruction _____

0968g

OBSERVATIONAL CHECKLIST FOR TARGET STUDENTS

INSTRUCTIONS TO OBSERVERS:

Each target student is observed for one 5-minute period during the "snap-shot" visit in the classroom. Check the appropriate column on the observational checklist form every 15 seconds for five minutes (observation numbers 1-20) for each student until all target students have been observed for the five minute period.

A check is made in column 1 to indicate whether the student is attending to the task at hand. On task-behaviors include such behaviors as: attending to words on the board, listening attentively to the teacher, responding to questions, asking questions, reading aloud, and reading silently. Off-task behaviors include such behaviors as: gazing out the window, nudging a peer, whispering to a peer, and getting up to sharpen a pencil. Cite example(s) of the off-task behavior(s) observed on the observational form.

A check is made in column 2 to indicate whether the student is working under teacher directions, working independently, working with another adult or student(s) in the classroom. The category "working under teacher directions" is used in all instances where the student is under teacher guidance. This category includes total classroom, small group, or individualized instruction. The category "working independently" is used to designate time when the student is working independently and not under the direction of the teacher. In the category "with other adult", please specify the adult (parent, aide, etc.) where possible, on observational form.

A check is made in column three to indicate whether the reading instructional task focused on: a) isolated letters or words or both, b) reading context c) non-reading activities such as listening, speaking and writing. Students can be involved in work focusing on letters, words, and contextual reading using basal readers, workbooks, dittos, etc. If student is engaged in reading context please specify on observation form, whether students are: a) reading words in the context of sentences, b) reading words in the context of paragraphs, or c) reading words in the context of whole stories. Reading- related activities are those activities congruent with "reading instruction" but not actually involving pupils in reading, for example, answering a question, waving one's hand to answer a question, asking a question, and writing a response. If student is engaged in task not related to reading (i.e., art project, math homework, etc.) please record in "other" column and specify the task on observational form. (Where student is engaged in two activities and you cannot select one, use a 1/2 to indicate primary, secondary emphasis.)

A check is made in column 4 to indicate the materials used by the target student during each observational period. If student is reading a tradebook please specify the book, where possible, on observational form.

Note your impressions regarding teacher expectations of target student success. Based on the interactions (verbal and nonverbal) among the teaching adults and target students during the "snap-shot" visit indicate under "IMPRESSIONS", on the observational form, whether the teacher showed negative expectations, positive expectations or no overall expectations for the academic success of the target students. (i.e., positive expectations-teacher shows confidence in cognitive ability of student, predicts that student will be able to accomplish tasks, etc.)

0919g

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School _____ Date _____

Teacher _____ Observer/Rater _____

Grade _____ OBSERVATIONAL CHECKLIST FOR TARGET STUDENTS Target Student _____

OBSERVATION NUMBER	1. TASK ATTENDING BEHAVIOR		2. WORKING...				3. READING INSTRUCTIONAL TASK						4. MATERIALS USED			
									Reading-Related Activities							
	On-Task	*Off-Task	Under Teacher Directions	Independently	*With Other Adult	With Other Student(s)	Letters and/or Words	*Reading in Context	Listening	Writing	Speaking	**Other	Basal Reader	*Tradebook	Workbook Worksheet	** Other
1.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
7.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
9.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
10.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
11.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
12.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
13.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
14.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
15.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
16.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
17.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
18.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
19.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
20.	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
	*Specify off-task behavior(s)		*Specify other adult				*Specify			**Specify			*Specify Tradebook			**Specify
	_____		_____				_____			_____			_____			_____
	_____		_____				_____			_____			_____			_____
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IMPRESSIONS:

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